

## COMMENTARY

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AIRLIFT  
Dispatch

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## Holidays offer much to be thankful for

By Col. Rusty Findley  
437 AW commander

The 2000 Armed Forces Basketball Championships went extremely well, especially for us as the U.S. Air Force came out on top 5-1 in the tournament. We have hosted two of the last three tournaments at Charleston and that is ample proof that we do it better than anyone else. We have also hosted the Air Force basketball training camp for the past three years and we will host them again for 2001. We hosted them in true Team Charleston style and that is the reason they keep coming back! See the article on page 15 for more details about the basketball games.

A special thanks to project officers, **Steve Parish** and **Eddie Goad** from the Fitness and Sports Center for their hard work on the tournament and training camp. Our 437th Services Squadron marketing team of **Wendy Varhegyi** and **Brian Rish** blazed new ground for the tournament as they provided real time standings and statistics on their web site—a first for any tournament that allowed everyone to find out how their favorite players and teams were doing. This new initiative earned high praise from the tournament officials.

As a sign of our improved working relationship with Local 1869, American Federation of Government Employees, the national AFGE president, **Bobby Harnage Sr.**, will speak at a luncheon in the Charleston club on Nov. 29 at 11:30 a.m. The American Federation of Government Employees is the largest union for government employees, representing 600,000 federal workers in the United States and overseas.

Harnage will speak about how management and labor can work together as a team. As national president, Harnage has strengthened AFGE's grass roots network for rapid member mobilization around future challenges on Capitol Hill. Everyone is invited to attend. To reserve your place, call 963-4501 or 963-5765. Our joint strategic plan has improved our dialogue with Local 1869...let's keep the momentum going!

The 437th Medical Group has been very busy preparing for key inspections by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations and a Health Services Inspection, both set to occur simultaneously Dec. 4-8. JCAHO will evaluate the medical groups compliance with nationally established joint commission standards. This is the same team that accredits civilian clinics and hospitals. The HSI is an exhaustive look from an Inspector General team at 16 different categories of health care, everything from the quality of health care to our administration practices. Both inspections are extremely important to this base and require a great deal of effort to meet their high standards.

We expect to do well during these inspections, but I'm also sure we'll get some good ideas on ways that we could improve. Our project officers Capt. Shelley Lovelady and Maj. Adam Bearden have been diligently preparing for these visits. Let's give them your full support for these important inspections!

Congratulations to our recent Intermediate Service School and Senior Service School selectees. We fared well in the competition for these coveted schools. ISS attendees will be **Majors Matt Eatman**, 437th Security Forces Squadron; **Michael Webb**, 15th Airlift Squadron; **Todd Dierlam**, 14th Airlift Squadron; and **Ronald Whittle**, 437th Operations Support Squadron. Eatman and Webb will attend the Army Command and Staff College while Dierlam and Whittle go to Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell AFB, Ala. SSS attendees will be **Lieutenant Colonels Sam Cox**, 14th Airlift

Squadron, and **Jon Roop**, 437th Civil Engineer Squadron. Cox will attend the National War College while Roop will attend the Air War College. Congratulations to **Lt. Col. Connie Davis**, deputy commander for the 437th Support Group, for her selection for a fellowship with the prestigious "think-tank" Rand Corporation in Santa Monica, Calif. **Lt. Col. Red Millander**, 17th Airlift Squadron commander, has a good chance of attending a SSS too since he was selected on the SSS alternate list. Selection to these prestigious schools is indicative of the great potential these folks have to continue to rise to senior leadership positions in our Air Force.

We have to bid farewell to **Maj. Marge Overly**, deputy chief for the 437 AW Staff Judge Advocate office Nov. 28. She has done a superb job in providing outstanding support to both wings and we're going to miss her! She plans to work in Washington, D.C. as a civilian lawyer.

I hope to see many of you at our semi-annual Foreign Object Damage prevention walk on Nov. 29 at 9 a.m. Everyone is invited to participate. Please plan to show about 15 minutes early at the south end of Hangar 700. You do not need a line badge to participate and the walk will cover most

of the flightline areas. Prizes will be awarded to those who find one of three carefully concealed "golden bolts."

I look forward to our monthly promotion recognition ceremony on Nov. 29 in the Charleston Club at 3 p.m. We also have our Airman Leadership School graduation on Nov. 30 at 6:30 p.m. in the Charleston Club. Both events are great opportunities to recognize those members of our team who do their jobs with a special kind of pride, professionalism and passion that makes us the premier airlift wing on the face of the planet!

These kind of significant events for our airmen give us a great opportunity to pass out well-deserved thanks to our outstanding Team Charleston members.

We're in the busiest shopping days of the year and the holiday parties are now in full swing. I hope to meet many of you at your unit's Christmas party as we begin the busy holiday season. But more cars on the road and parties can lead to dangerous combinations and I'd like to reemphasize the importance of enjoying the holidays, but doing so in a safe manner. That means, if you are going to drink, then don't drive. If you're going shopping, then watch out for the other cars. The toughest challenge for any commander is the loss of someone in a traffic fatality or some other unwise choice. Be careful and have fun...I want everyone to come back on Monday safe and sound!

I am very thankful for being part of such a great team that does a really important mission for our country. I hope everyone enjoys his or her Thanksgiving holiday. To allow the hard-working members of Team Charleston to enjoy a relaxing holiday weekend, Friday will be a down day for the 437th and 315th Airlift Wings.

Commanders and supervisors shall ensure that mission essential functions are manned; however, they should release as many military members as possible from duty. Liberal leave policy is encouraged for civilian employees.

As we celebrate the holidays, we have a lot to be thankful for. I'm certainly thankful for my immediate family. I also am very thankful everyday for the U.S. Air Force and the 437th Airlift Wing. We serve in the greatest Air Force and live in the best country in the world.

It is the efforts of each and every one of you that has kept this nation free. I'm proud of you and thank you for what you do for our country and Air Force...have a great Thanksgiving holiday!



Photo by Lt. Col. Ed Memei  
Col. Rusty Findley, 437 AW commander, briefs Charleston area civic leaders on a tour of Keeself AFB, Miss.